

# NCERT - CLASS 6 - CHAPTER 7: ASHOKA, THE EMPEROR WHO GAVE UP WAR

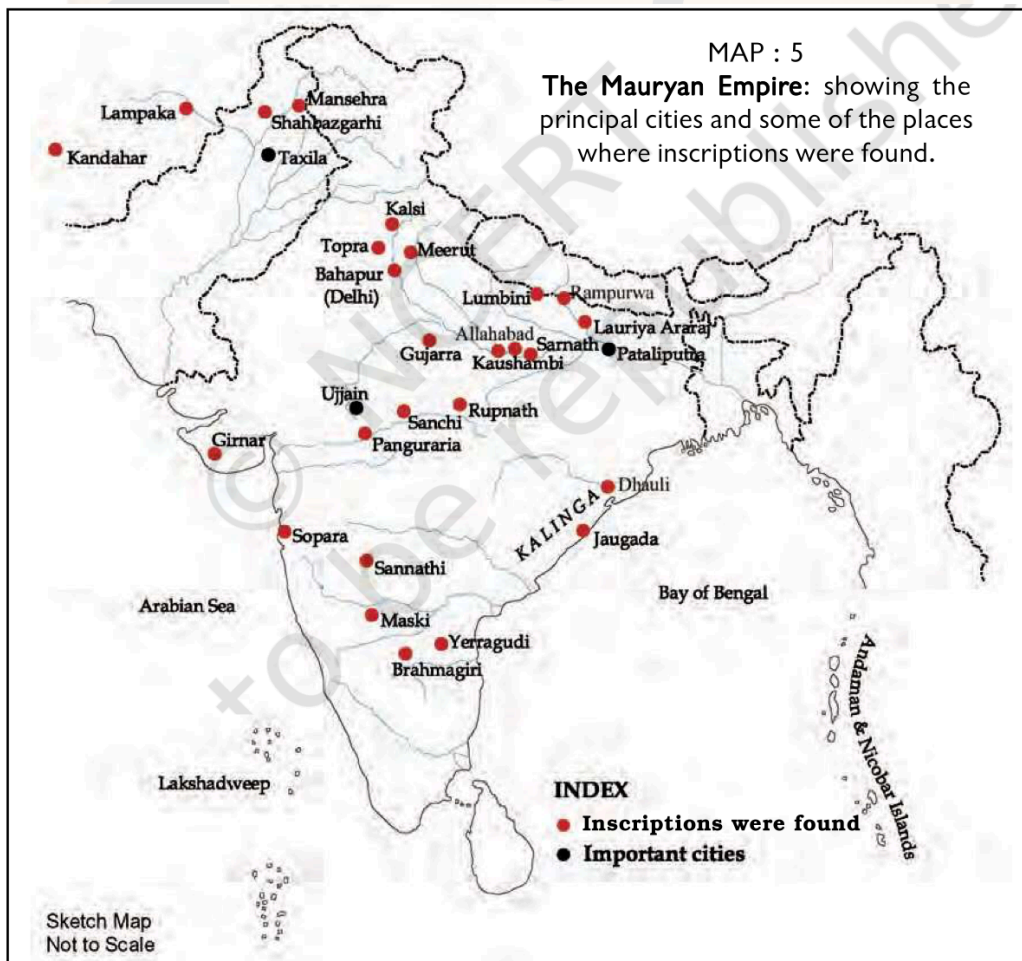
## Big Kingdom = Empire

- Lion capital → in currency, coins, and on top of stone pillar at Sarnath
- Ashoka → instructions on pillar-rock inscriptions
- Dynasty was founded by Chandragupta Maurya 2300 years ago → assisted by Chanakya/Kautilya - ideas in Arthashastra
- Chandragupta Maurya → son Bindusara → his son Ashoka



## Empire

- Pataliputra was the capital
- Taxila was the gateway to North-West, Central Asia
- Ujjain lie along North-South route - Merchants, officials & craftsmen lived here
- Villages had farmers and herders
- Forests had Hunter-gatherers
- People in different parts → different languages, food & clothes
- Empire is larger than Kingdom & Emperor is greater than Kings → more resources, armies & officials are required



## Ruling the Empire

### Capital Pataliputra and surrounding areas

- Direct control of Emperor
- The Royal family and Senior Ministers help the Emperor
- Officials collected taxes from farmers, herders, craft persons, and traders who lived in villages and town areas
- Officials also punished those who disobeyed the Emperor's orders
- Officials' salary → Emperor
- Messengers and Spies travelled within the empire watching officials and keeping the Emperor informed

### Provinces

- Ruled by Royal Princes as Governors - Emperor controlled from Capital
- Provincial capitals → Taxila, Ujjain
- Local customs and rules were followed

### Other in-between areas

- Roads & rivers were controlled - important for transport
- Collected available resources as tax & tribute
- Arthashastra example: Northwest → blanket was collected; South India → Gold, precious stones were collected → probably as tribute

### Forest region

- Independent but under Mauryan rule
- Expected to provide elephants, timber, honey, and wax to Officials as a tribute

Difference: Tax - regularly paid; Tribute - people's will

### Emperor & Capital city

Greek ruler of West Asia, Seleucus Nicator sent Megasthenes as Ambassador to Chandragupta Maurya's court

Megasthenes wrote an account of the kingdom -

About Emperor:

- His appearance celebrated with grand royal processions
- Was carried in a golden palanquin
- Guards rode decorated elephants
- Some guards carried live trees with birds - trained parrots flock emperor's head
- Armed women to protect the emperor — afraid that someone may kill him
- Special servants who taste the food before he eats
- Never sleeps in the same bedroom for two nights

About Pataliputra:

- Large & beautiful city
- Surrounded by a massive wall with 570 towers, 64 gates
- Has 2-3 storey houses built with wood and mud brick
- Palace was built with wood and decorated with stone carvings

- Palace surrounded by gardens and bird enclosures

### Ashoka

- Famous Mauryan king
- The first ruler to reach people with inscriptions
- Inscriptions were in Prakrit language using Brahmi script
- Kalinga - ancient name for Coastal Orissa
- Kalinga war - The first king in history who gave up war after seeing violence and bloodshed
- Mentions about Dhamma in Kalinga inscription; Dhamma (Prakrit) → Dharma (Sanskrit)

### Ashoka's dhamma

- Did not involve worship of god or performance of sacrifice
- He felt it is his duty to instruct subjects
- He was inspired by the teachings of Buddha

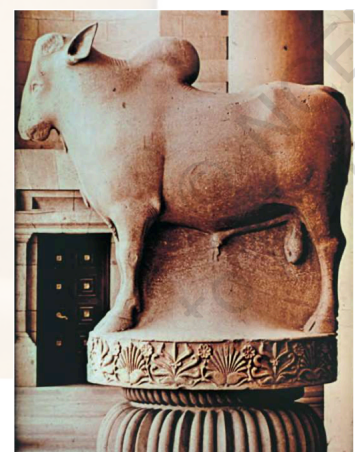
His troubling thoughts:

- Conflicts among different religions
- Animal sacrifice
- Slaves/servants being ill-treated
- Family/neighbour quarrels
- Felt his duty to solve these problems
- Appointed Officials (dhamma mahamatta) to teach dhamma
- Had his messages inscribed on rock/pillar inscriptions, officials must read to the illiterate people
- Messengers sent to spread dhamma to other lands → Syria, Egypt, Greece, Sri Lanka
- Built roads, wells, rest houses
- Arranged medical treatment for humans and animals

### Ashoka's message - Rampurva bull

- Finely polished stone sculpture
- Part of Mauryan pillar, Rampurwa, Bihar
- Now at Rashtrapati Bhavan

Brahmi Script → base for most Indian scripts



### Looking Ahead

Mauryan Empire collapsed 2200 years ago and after that, North-West - parts of North India:

- Indo-Greeks ruled for 100 years

- Then, Shakas from Central Asia ruled for 500 years
- Next came Kushanas
- Shakas were defeated by Guptas

North - parts of Central India:

- General of Maurya, Pushyamitra Shunga established a kingdom
- Then ruled Kanvas, followed by other dynasty rulers until Guptas

Western India:

- Satavahanas established a kingdom 2100 years ago - ruled for 400 years
- Satavahanas fought often with Shakas
- Vakatakas established rule 1700 years ago - ruled parts of Central India as well

South India:

- Cholas, Cheras, Pandyas ruled 2200-1800 years ago
- Pallavas, Chalukyas ruled 1500 years ago
- Other kingdoms too ruled these areas known through → Coins, inscriptions, books

### **Other Changes that took place simultaneously**

- Spread of agriculture
- Growth of new towns
- Craft production increased
- Trade developed → Land routes within and outside Indian subcontinent; sea routes to West Asia, East Africa, South East Asia
- Earliest temples and stupas built
- Books written
- Science - Discoveries made